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How to Produce Articulate Artists

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How to produce articulate artists: a case study in effective collaborative teaching

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Summary:

This twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation will describe the team-taught, year-long Foundations Core Concepts Program at Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan. It has been in place since 2006 and has successfully integrated a course previously called "Language of Art" (taught by an art historian) with hands-on studio assignments previously taught in a stand-alone design course (taught by a studio professor). We have found that this hybrid approach is extremely effective in developing sensitive and articulate art majors who are prepared to integrate design concepts into all of their artworks and to analyze and describe eloquently both personal and historical works of art. This presentation will include a description of the theoretical underpinnings of this program, an overview of the course learning outcomes, examples of two unusual and unusually effective student projects, and a summary of the evidence of the program's effectiveness.

Why do art majors need to be articulate?

Student success:

- Art History courses
- Studio critiques

Careers requiring artists to be articulate:

- Teachers
- Designers
- Professional artists
- Graduate school students

Good Citizenship

- Articulate students become active participants in society

Up to 2005

- Language of Art taught by an art historian
- **2D & 3D Foundations combined and team taught over two semesters by art faculty**
- Drawing
- Figure Study 2D & 3D



2006 to Present

- **Language of Art and 2D Foundations combined and team taught over two semesters by an art historian and one art faculty**
- 3D course
- Drawing
- Digital Concepts

Up to 2005

- Language of Art: instruction was presented in teacher-centered slide lectures that were primarily aimed at *visual and auditory* learners.
- 2D & 3D Foundations combined: instruction was primarily aimed at *kinesthetic* learners.



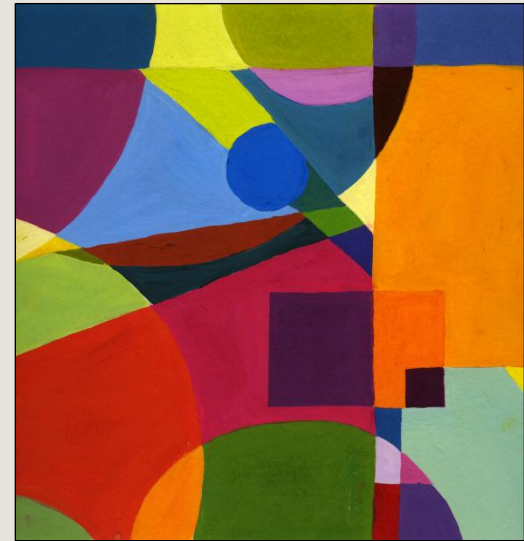
2006 to Present

- Language of Art and 2D Foundations combined.
- **Instruction is now learner-centered and designed to integrate *visual, auditory and kinesthetic* modes of learning.**

Subtractive Color

At the heart of our redesign of the Foundations program was a desire to create a more **learner-centered environment** that engages students in deep learning through **multiple sensory modalities** (seeing, hearing, manipulating, etc).

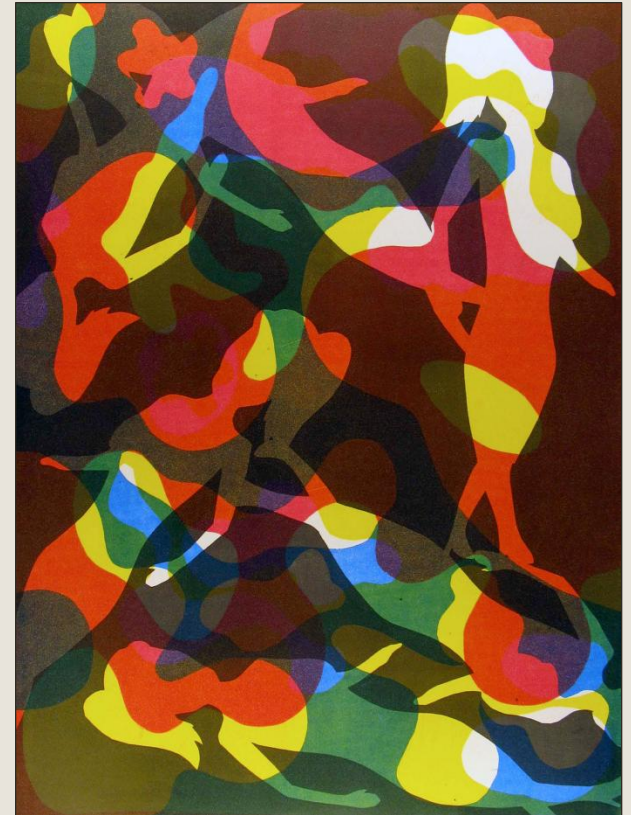
In a learner-centered paradigm students spend ***less time*** being “instructed” or lectured to or talked at, as was the case for our existing Language of Art course, and ***more time*** engaging in learning activities that ask them to actually do something.



In a learner-centered environment, the instructor's role **expands** from being a professor who disseminates truths to being a facilitator or mediator of the learning process. In this expanded role, the instructor engages in three key educational tasks:

- educational design—creating learning tasks and classroom conditions that are conducive to active student involvement;
- educational coach—facilitating, coordinating, and orchestrating learning “from the sidelines,” while students assume the role of active players (participants) in the learning process;
- educational assessor—evaluating the effectiveness of learning by collecting data on learning outcomes and using this data as feedback to improve the learning process.

CMYK Monotype



The redesign also took into consideration two other factors.

First, the vast majority of our art majors are visual and/or kinesthetic learners, preferring to process new information through seeing examples in slide lectures and manipulating materials.

Second, pedagogical research indicates that all students tend to learn best when information is presented through **as many sense experiences as possible**, including the visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

- As British neuroscientist Susan Greenfield has observed, “**Humans have evolved to build a picture of the world through our senses working in unison, exploiting the immense interconnectivity that exists in the brain.**”

CMYK Monotype



Educational design:

Overview of course learning outcomes

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the **fall** semester, students will:

- be able to define in their own words the vocabulary associated with art elements, design principles, and selected art media and strategies.
- produce a portfolio of artwork demonstrating their understanding of many of these terms.
- find connections between the content of this course and the Art Department's Learning Outcomes.
- begin to develop personalized images and ideas.
- begin career exploration.



Whole pencil drawing (detail)



Photocopy to Collage to Sequence

Educational design:

Overview of course learning outcomes

Course Outcomes

By the end of the **Winter** semester, students will:

- produce a portfolio of artwork demonstrating their understanding of **art elements and design principles as they relate to architecture and installation art.**
- demonstrate knowledge of the history of Western architecture through quizzes, projects, and a final exam,**
- develop a sense of historical perspective,**
- know how to conduct research for artist reports,
- deliver an oral presentation on an installation artist,
- collaborate with other students to create an installation,
- demonstrate an ability to describe objects within their historical contexts,
- use critical thinking skills to organize a paper, and
- find connections between the content of this course and the Art Department's Learning Outcomes.



Collage to Book



Criteria for reflection and assessment

1. Self-Reflection

Maintains a journal as a place to reflect upon accomplishments, values, ideas, progress, future plans, and frustrations.

Writes in the journal for fifteen minutes at least once per class, using these criteria as essay topics.

Saves all notes, plans, sketches, handouts, assignments, ideas, completed projects etc, organizes these saved items, and brings them to midterms and critiques.

Reflects on the relationship between the content of this course and the Art Department's Learning Outcomes.

2. Art Terminology and Observation

Understands and employs elements and principles of design in works of art.

Uses conventional art terminology when describing his/her artwork and the work of others.

Looks carefully at artworks, their elements, principles, media and other visual qualities.

3. Effort, Positive Attitude, Participation, Safety and Responsibility

Effort implies that the student attends every class, works hard from the beginning to the end of class, and works outside of scheduled class time.

Positive attitude implies that the student enjoys challenges and works through disappointments.

Participation implies that the student contributes to critiques and discussions, helps other students, and learns from others.

Safety suggests that the student follows instructions, rules and procedures, and handles materials, tools and equipment with care.

Responsibility suggests that the student is respectful of others' time, tools, materials, feelings and artwork, and completes assignments on time. It also means that students stop private conversations during critiques, class discussions and announcements.

4. Technical Skill and Craftsmanship

Care is evident in the completion, storage and presentation of projects.

Revisions are made as necessary.

Attention is paid to important details, especially as they relate to elements and principles of design

Materials, tools and equipment are used respectfully, skillfully and efficiently.

5. Personal Perspectives, Exploration and Creativity

Develops a sense of self as an individual with distinct values and perspectives.

Integrates prior and personal experiences into projects.

Expresses values, feelings and ideas through artwork.

Attempts novel approaches and solutions.

Explores uncharted territory with imagery and materials.

6. Critical Thinking

Includes subtle and evocative details in work.

Explores big ideas and asks nuanced questions; reaches beyond the obvious, the simple and the superficial; avoids generalities and rushed conclusions.

Embraces complexity and seeks multiple viewpoints.

Thinks clearly and logically.

Organizes ideas into well-structured levels and layers.

Shows an appreciation for the relative importance of ideas, themes, characteristics and elements.

Synthesizes and summarizes information in order to reveal key ideas.

Maintains focus; doesn't become distracted by, or stuck on, unimportant details or ideas.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE FOUNDATIONS PROGRAM

SIENA HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY

©Peter Barr and Christine Reising

Design is the orchestration of the visual elements:

I. Visual Elements

	Glossary 3 – 10	Textbook 26 - 69
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The term “visual elements,” also referred to as “elements” or “plastic elements,” describes the fundamentals of color, form, line, etc, that most artists control in order to create images and to achieve desired effects.

Color and Value	3	46 - 54
Line	6	26 - 35
Motion and Time	7	64 - 69
Pattern	7	513
Shape, volume, mass	7	35 - 46
Space and Point of View	8	58 - 63
Texture	10	54 - 58

II. Design Principles

	11 – 13	71 - 97
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“Design Principles” or “principles” refer to the combination of visual elements. The term “design” is preferred when the effect is decorative and when emphasis is placed on principles such as balance, repetition, variety, unity and proportion. The term “composition” is sometimes used when visual elements are organized in order to create emphasis, focus, and meaning.

Balance	11	74 -82
Emphasis	12	72 - 86
Figure and ground	12	43 - 45
Proportion and Scale	13	88 - 97
Repetition and Rhythm	13	86 - 87
Variety and unity	13	72 - 74

III. Style

	14 - 15	100 - 107
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Style is a characteristic manner or mode of artistic expression or design. There are personal styles (Monet’s style), period styles (Baroque style), national styles (Japanese style), etc.

Glossary

Textbook

IV. Media-specific vocabulary

16 - 30

112 - 264

The term “media” (singular is medium, from the Latin meaning “means by which something is communicated”) refers to the tools, materials and methods used to create an image or object, as in drawing, painting, sculpture, etc. In the arts, it is also a term that is used to refer to works that employ electronic and digital means, as in “digital media” or “media arts.”

Drawing	16	112 - 129
Painting	18	130 - 143
Printmaking/Book Arts	19	144 - 157
Photography	22	158 - 189
Graphic Design	23	258 - 264
Ceramics	24	240 - 246
Sculpture	26	160 - 213
Mixed media	28	142 - 143
		203 - 204
Architecture	28	214 - 237

Textbook: Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Art* (Eighth Edition), Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2006.



Quizzes are given regularly to make sure students learn these vocabulary terms, followed by a cumulative final exam.

I. VISUAL ELEMENTS

Color and Value

Additive Primaries

RGB, the primary colors used on computer monitors and in theater lighting, are often referred to as additive primaries because combining all of them produces white light. See also primaries and subtractive primaries.

Analogous colors

Colors that lie next to one another on the color wheel and that share qualities of hue are called analogous colors or harmonious hues.

CMYK

These letters stand for the primary colors Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Black used in ink-jet printers and the printing industry. In print design, colors are defined as a percentage of each of these 4 colors. For example, the CMYK abbreviation for the color black would be 0-0-0-100. In contrast, display devices (i.e. computer monitors) typically define colors using RGB.

Color Wheel

The first color wheel was invented by Sir Isaac Newton in the early 18th century. Newton used a prism to split white sunlight into a color spectrum and then joined the two ends of the spectrum to show the natural progression of colors in a circle. A century later, Johannes Itten divided Newton’s color wheel into three primary colors, three secondary colors and six tertiary colors.

Complementary colors

This term refers to specific pairs of colors (e.g., red and green) that appear opposite each other on the color wheel. When complementary colors are placed next to one another, they enhance each other by virtue of their simultaneous contrast.

Cool colors

Colors associated with water and ice, such as a blue, green, or violet, are referred to as “cool colors.” They tend to recede spatially behind warm colors. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who invented this concept of color temperature in the early 19th century, believed that cool colors were associated with weakness and unsettled feelings.

Grayscale

This is the term used in the printing industry and in computer programs to describe the range of tones (or values) from white to gray to black.

Hue

Hue is a term used interchangeable with the colors that are found in a rainbow (visible spectrum): red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. (Purple is sometimes further subdivided into indigo and violet.)

Light or visible light

Light is that segment of the electromagnetic energy spectrum that excites the eyes and produces visual sensations.

Local color

Local color refers to the “actual” color of an object (without regard for the color of the light source, shadows or reflections).

Monochromatic

Literally meaning “one-colored,” the term monochromatic describes images or objects that are executed in a single color—or with so little contrast of colors as to appear essentially uniform in hue.

Munsell color tree

This is a diagram that illustrates the interrelationship between hue, value and intensity. It was originally devised as a sphere by Albert H. Munsell.

Palette

A palette is a surface on which pigments are placed and prepared, and from which the artist works. It also refers to the artist’s choice of colors as seen in a work of art; for example an artist may choose to work with a limited palette that contains just one or two hues, or a full palette that includes the entire spectrum of colors.

Pigment

Pigments are coloring matter. They are usually mixed with binding and thinning substances in order to make paint. Some pigments are derived from clay, including ochre and sienna; some from insects and fish, including carmine (derived from dried bodies of insects reared on cacti) and Japanese white (derived from 100-year old oyster shells). Still others are derived from metals, such as lead white and chromium oxide green; some from semiprecious stones, including blue lapis and blue chrysocolia. Modern chemistry has produced a full spectrum of pigments in the laboratory. Many pigments are toxic and/or cancer-causing, including those that contain cinnabar, cadmium, chromium and lead.

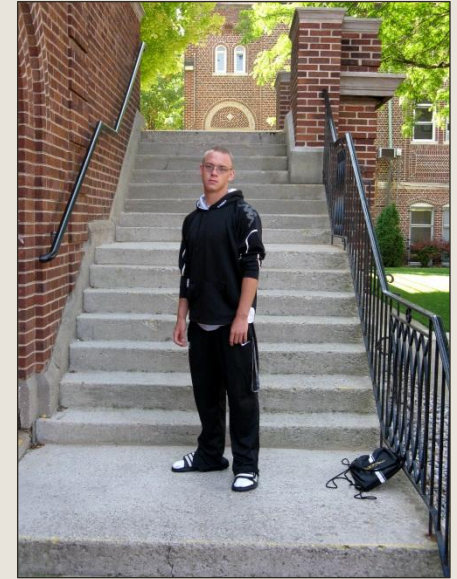
Primary colors

Primary colors are the colors that can be combined to create all other colors. There are three sets of primary colors, depending on their application, known by their initial letters: RYB, CMYK and RGB.

Two effective projects:

**I. Weaving in the style of Dinh Q. Lê:
An Exploration of Figure/Ground, Unity/Variety,
Pattern, Rhythm, Repetition, and Emphasis**

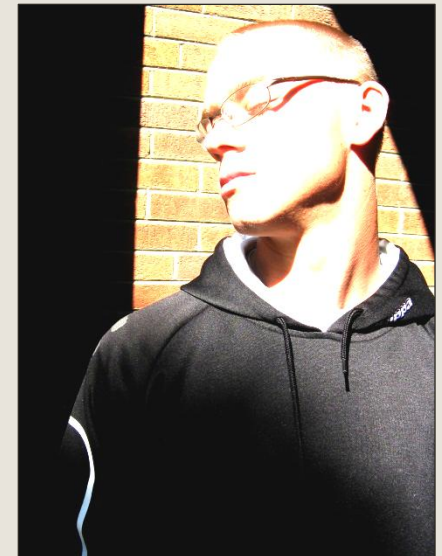
Begins with selection of two art images from the course textbook, one that the student is attracted to and one s/he dislikes. A short paper on his/her reasons is presented to class. The second phase, seeming unrelated, involves the investigation of “style” through photography.



Documentary



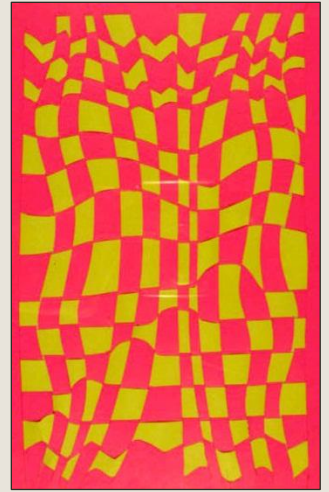
New Vision

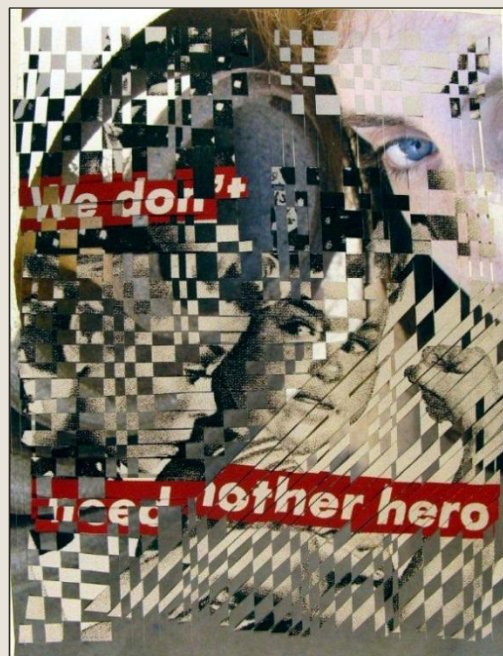


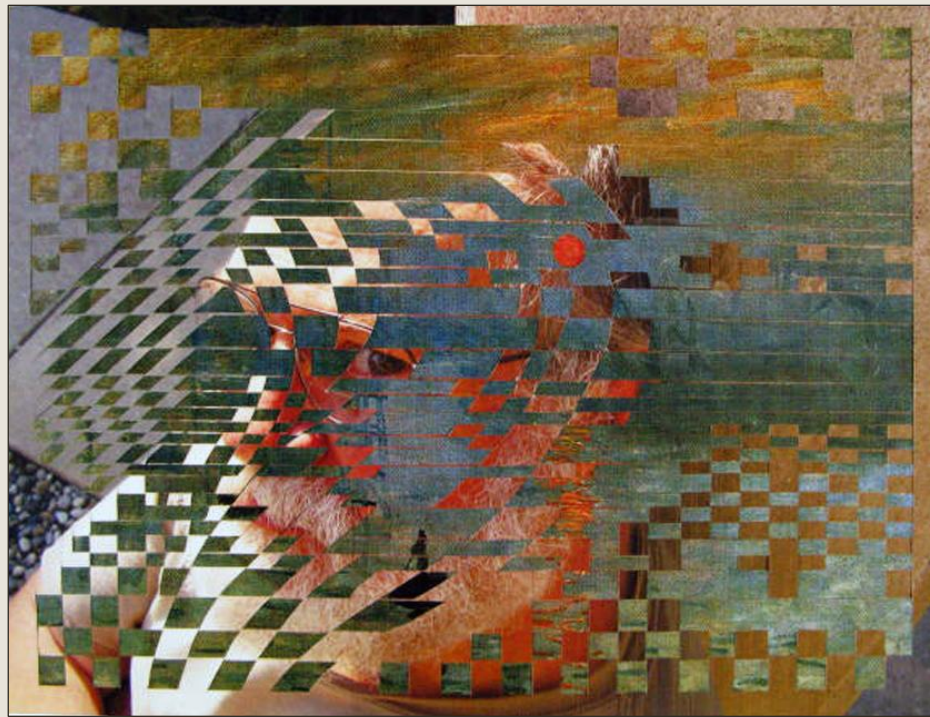
Pictorialist

The second phase involves the practice of weaving techniques to explore emphasis and rhythm.

The final phase results in a weaving influenced by the work of Din Q. Lê, who is the subject of a brief lecture. The student weaves the artwork that s/he selected from the textbook into a large print of their new vision photograph.







II. Saint Stained Glass Window Project: lancet window, hard-edged shapes, symbols, attributes, leading, and transparency

After several color theory projects, a lecture on Gothic architecture is followed by a visit to a Gothic chapel and a short research paper on a saint of the student's choice. The student then designs a lancet stained glass window using attributes and colors representing the saint and ex tempera paint.





7. Picture plane:

- A. ...This is a term used to describe any method of print making from a flat matrix, such as lithography.
- B. ... This term refers to a surface on which pigments are placed and prepared, and from which the artist works.
- C. ... Artists and art historians use this term to describe art that strives to imitate the way things appear naturally in the world (rather than express an intellectual theory or idea of perfection).
- D. ... This is the flat, two-dimensional surface on which a picture is created.

8. In the round:

- A. ... “In the round” refers to working with clay on a potter’s wheel.
- B. ... “In the round” describes the circular motion used by printmakers to apply ink to a matrix.
- C. ... Free-standing sculpture that is meant to be viewed from any angle can be described as being “in the round.”
- D. ... In sculpture, a mold is said to be “in the round” when it is made of plaster or clay (but not wax).

9. Image Resolution:

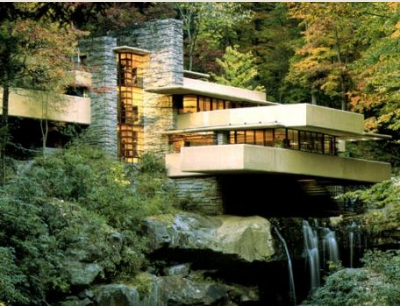
- A. ... The excess ink that remains on a press plate after an image has been printed is known as image resolution.
- B. ... This term refers to the amount of detail in a digital image, usually expressed in dots per inch (dpi); 300 dpi is considered to be an optimal setting for printing.
- C. ... Image resolution results when digital images are layered on top of each other when using software such as Adobe Photoshop.
- D. ... Also known as retinal continuation, image resolution occurs when images blend into each other as they are viewed in quick succession.

10. Depth of Field:

- A. ... This term refers to a principle that a small part of an artwork should relate to a larger part of the work in the same way that the larger part relates to the whole.
- B. ... This refers to the parts of the composition that seem to exist at various depths behind the picture plane, including foreground, middle ground or background.
- C. ... Depth of field describes the relationship between the main subject of a work of art and its depicted setting.
- D. ... This term describes the range from near to far, in which the elements of a photograph are sharply focused.

11. The architect of *Fallingwater* (to the right)is...?

- A ... Louis Sullivan.
- B. ... Frank Gehry.
- C. ... Frank Lloyd Wright.
- D. ... Ithiel Town.



12. Orthogonal

- A. ... In linear perspective, orthogonals are the lines that appear to be parallel with each other and yet converge to a vanishing point.
- B. ... This is the flat, two-dimensional surface on which a picture is created.
- C. ... In linear perspective, the “orthogonal” is the imaginary line (frequently, where the earth seems to meet the sky) where several horizon lines meet.
- D. ... This term describes works of art that resemble human beings and other figures. It is also used occasionally as a synonym for all representational imagery.

Multiple Choice Vocabulary
Pre- and Post-test

On the first day of class fall semester and then again as part of the final exam at the end of winter semester, we administered a multiple choice test that asked students to identify the best definition for **twenty** vocabulary words and images. The pre-test was not returned to the students.

The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the Foundations program in improving student achievement in the “development and use of appropriate art terminology.” The terms tested and the percentage of students who identified the correct definitions are as follows:

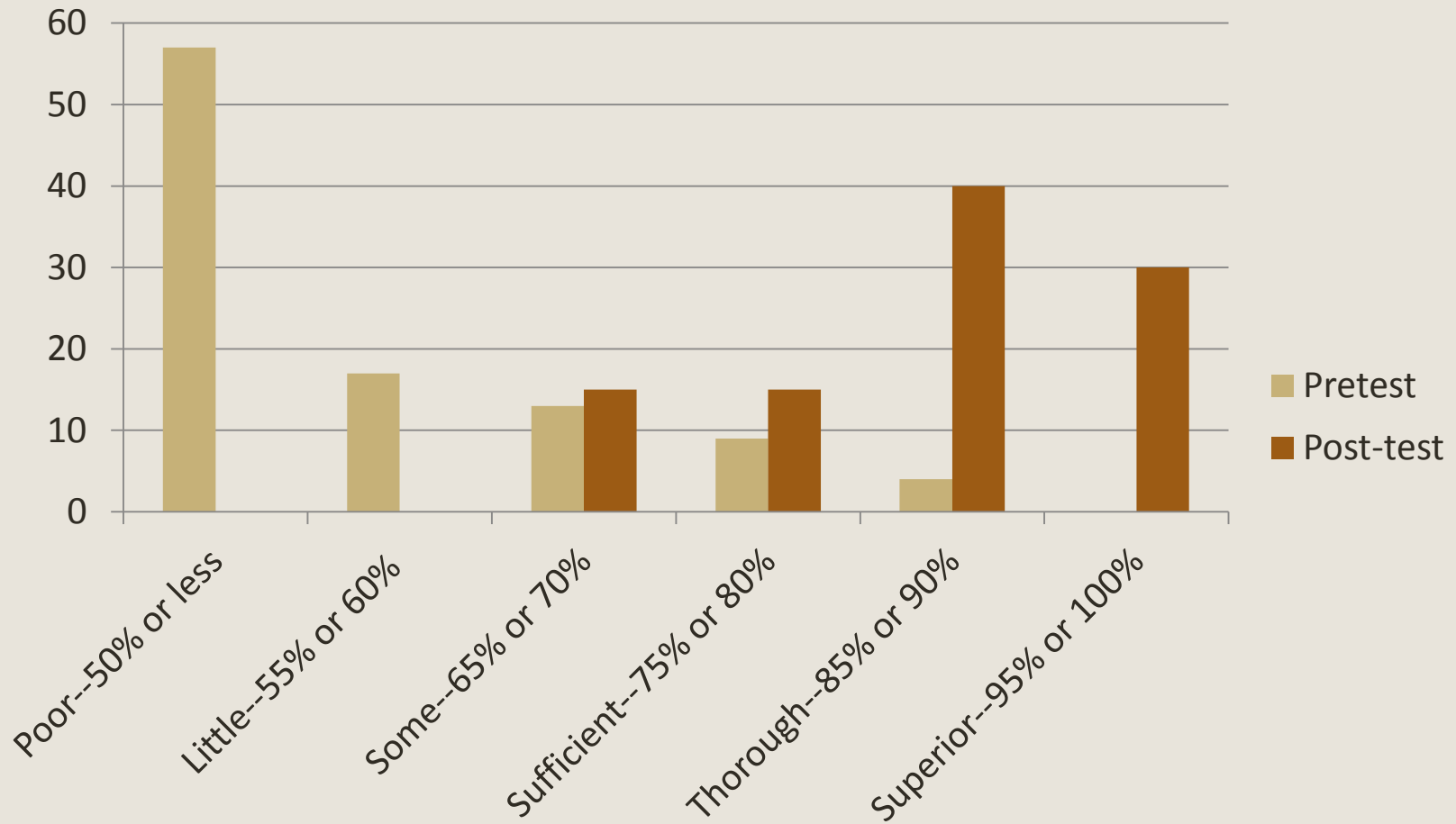
Percentage of students who identified the correct definition (2010-2011)

Term	Pretest	Post-test	Increase
Parthenon (image ID)	48	100	52
In the round	57	100	43
Picture plane	71	100	29
Tone	81	100	19
Cross hatching	81	94	13
Collage	81	94	13
Asymmetrical balance	62	88	26
Vanishing point	71	88	17
FL Wright 's <i>Falling Water</i> (artist ID)	76	88	12
Aperture	76	88	12
Installation art	76	88	12
Image resolution	81	88	7
Kinetic art	57	81	24
Complementary color	48	81	37
Orthogonal	57	81	24
Idealism	43	75	32
Vector graphics	67	75	8
Depth of field	24	69	45
RGB	52	69	17
Classical Greek (historical perspect.)	43	62	19

2010-11 academic year

Out of the students who took the **pretest**, 26% met the benchmark of sufficient knowledge or better (15 out of 20 correct answers or better).

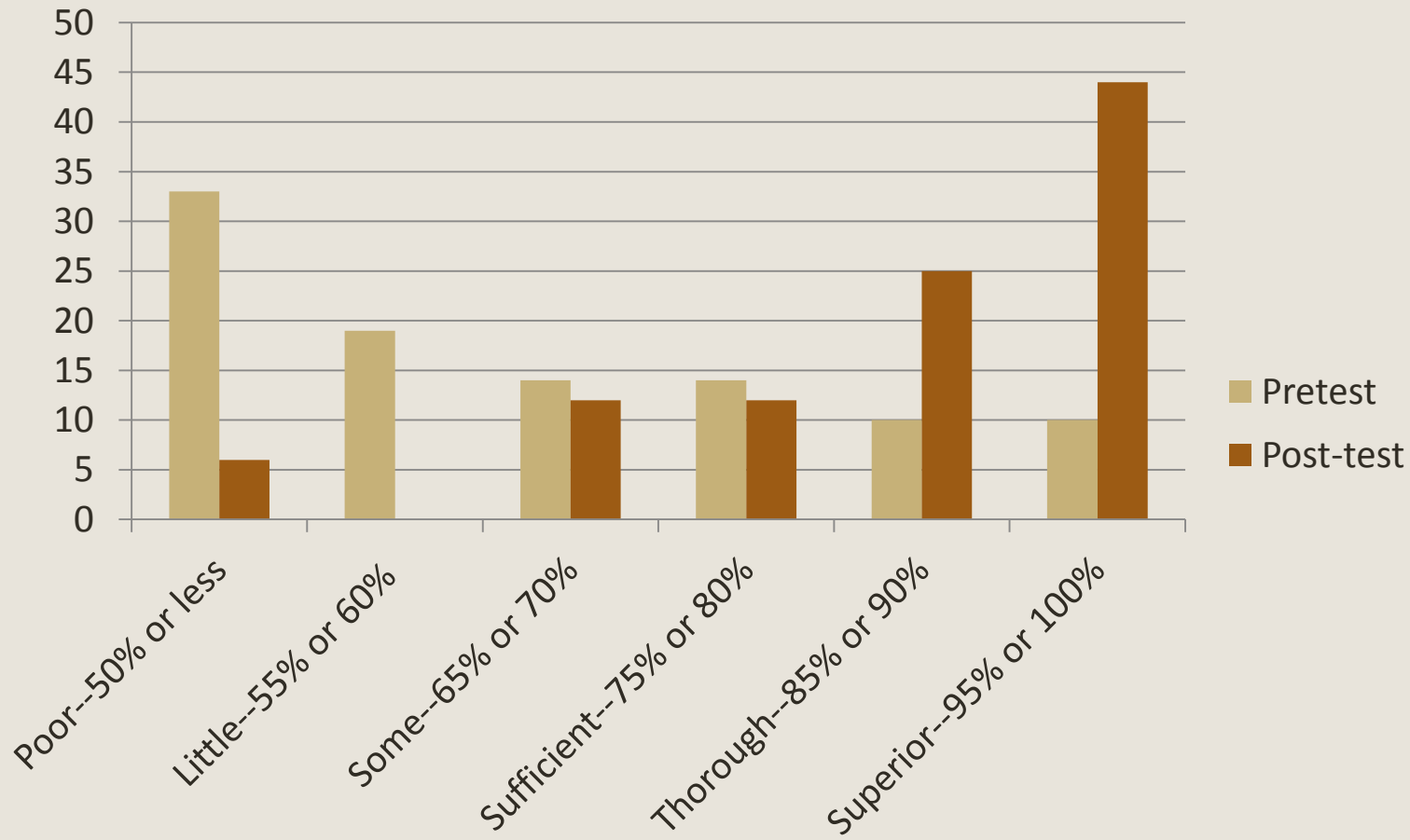
Out of the students who took the **post-test** 85% met the benchmark of sufficient knowledge or better (15 out of 20 correct answers or better), an **increase of 59%**.



2011-12 academic year

Out of the students who took the **pretest**, 34% met the benchmark of sufficient knowledge (15 out of 20 correct answers) or better.

Out of the students who took the **post-test** 81% met the benchmark of sufficient knowledge (15 out of 20 correct answers) or better, an **increase of 47%**.



SUMMARY

Through collaborative teaching, using the skills from studio and art history, students engage with ideas and art language using multiple sensory modalities that have demonstrated success in creating articulate students prepared for upper level classes, careers in the arts, and citizenship.



Pat Steir's project *The Breughel Series (A Vanitas of Styles)*—the idea source for *The Patchwork Project: Investigation of Style*

